



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Fish and Wildlife

Rogue Watershed District Office

1495 East Gregory Road

Central Point OR 97502

(541) 826-8774

(541) 826-8776

dfw.state.or.us



July 14, 2011

Stephanie Kelleher
Bureau of Land Management
3040 Biddle Road
Medford, OR 97504

Dear Stephanie,

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the EA for the Middle Applegate Watershed Pilot Joe Demonstration Project, specifically with regard to black-tailed deer. Roosevelt elk are present in this area, but the Applegate Unit is designated as an Elk De-Emphasis area so elk will not be included in this discussion.

The Applegate watershed has a healthy population of migratory black-tailed deer. These animals spend the summer in the high Siskiyou Mountains and migrate to lower elevations in the winter. Deer in southwest Oregon migrate longer distances and between greater elevations than other black-tail populations in the state. ODFW gives deer winter range high importance in Jackson County because it is limited in area and deer are under more environmental stress in the winter. In general, good deer winter range contains forage, hiding cover, space, and freedom from disturbance (roads, humans, domestic dogs, etc). Deer get the most nutritional value from early seral-stage vegetation, including shrubs, forbs and grasses. Deerbrush (*C. integerrimus*) and buckbrush (*C. cuneatus*) are the most important winter browse species, but deer will eat a wide range of vegetation. Acorns are also important when they are available. A portion of the Pilot Joe project area is classified as sensitive deer winter range by the Jackson County Planning Department (Goal 5 Resources Background Document, Jackson County 1990, p. 37-38). See attached map.

The treatments described in the preferred alternative of this EA should be beneficial to deer. Specific treatments are:

- Removing decadent shrubs and allowing growth of younger age shrubs
- Creating forest openings that will allow growth of grasses and forbs
- Leaving dense pockets of timber for hiding cover
- Retaining/encouraging hardwoods
- Underburning to maintain vegetation in early-seral stage condition
- Protecting oaks, removing conifers from oak woodlands
- Increasing fire-resiliency
- No new road construction



This project is well planned with regard to wildlife habitat and has the support of ODFW.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince Oredson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Vince Oredson
Wildlife Habitat Biologist
(541) 826-8774 ext. 232 vince.j.oredson@state.or.us

Sensitive Deer Winter Range in the Pilot Joe Project Area

